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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR

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TAGS: [IS](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: AL-QUDS VICE PRESIDENT COMMENTS ON FATAH CONGRESS,  
JERUSALEM

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Zakaria al-Qaq, a senior official at Jerusalem's al-Quds University, said that PA President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) is using the Fatah General Congress to shore up his authority, following the Hamas take-over of Gaza and the failure of negotiations with Israel. Al-Qaq added that al-Quds University President Sari Nusseibah wishes he could use the Congress to move into Fatah leadership, but that Nusseibah is too far outside the leadership circle to move in at this point. Al-Qaq also said Jerusalem's Palestinians believe the PA is ignoring them. End Summary.

ABBAS SEEKING FATAH CONGRESS TO  
LEGITIMIZE HIS CONTINUING LEADERSHIP  
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¶2. (C) Al-Qaq, al-Quds University's Vice President for External Affairs, told PolOff July 7 that he believes President Abbas is pushing to hold the Fatah Sixth General Congress as a means of legitimizing his own leadership. Al-Qaq said Abbas had been "discredited" by the Hamas take-over of Gaza and the failure of negotiations with Israel. He said PA elections scheduled for January 2010 are unlikely to occur, given the split between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in which case Abbas will lose his legal standing as president. According to al-Qaq, Abbas sees the Congress as a chance to prove that Palestinians want him as their leader, so he can maintain his position beyond January of next year.

¶3. (C) Al-Qaq said that Sari Nusseibah, President of al-Quds University, wishes he were part of Fatah's leadership, but he has been sidelined by leaders in the movement over the past several years and feels slighted. He said Nusseibah believes that running the university is a second-rate job, and he would rather be a political leader. Al-Qaq said Nusseibah wishes he could use the Congress to boost his own position in Fatah, but that he is already too far outside the leadership ranks to move into a significant position based on the Congress elections.

¶4. (C) Al-Qaq said that Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are more cut off from the West Bank than ever, and that they sense that the PA leadership is abandoning them. As an example, he pointed out that the issue of Jerusalem is no longer a part of PA rhetoric. He said he believes that Jerusalemites need to take an active role in Municipality affairs in order to stave off the disintegration of Palestinian society in East Jerusalem. They should participate in municipal elections, he said, including voting and running candidates. Israel is not concerned with Palestinians' well-being, al-Qaq said, so East Jerusalemites should engage in civic issues and passive resistance, or else Jerusalem will fall completely under Israeli control.  
WALLES